

U.S. Department of the Interior

Draft Environmental Assessment

Multipurpose Building and Visitor Contact Station
Huron Wetland Management District and
Wetland Acquisition Office

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Environmental Assessment for Multipurpose Building and Visitor Contact Station Huron Wetland Management District and Wetland Acquisition Office

Date: May 30, 2022

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to evaluate the effects associated with this proposed action and to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508) and U.S. Department of the Interior (43 CFR 46; 516 DM 8) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (550 FW 3) regulations and policies. NEPA requires examination of the effects of proposed actions on the natural and human environment. Appendix A identifies laws and executive orders not otherwise evaluated within this EA.

Proposed Action

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to construct a new multipurpose building and visitor contact station for the Huron Wetland Management District and Wetland Acquisition Office (WMD/WAO) on approximately five to seven acres within the Weaver Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), west of Huron, South Dakota. The Weaver WPA is currently owned in fee title by the Service. The proposed building, which would be approximately 8,500 square feet in size, would serve as the administrative offices for the Huron WMD/WAO and provide a location for visitor meetings and education. The building site would also accommodate a parking area, stormwater retention basin, a septic system with an evapotranspiration bed, and utility rights-of-way for electricity, communications, and potable water. A no hunting zone would be established around the proposed facility for public safety.

In addition to building construction, the proposed action would include improvements to nearby roadways, specifically along portions of 393rd Avenue, 207th Street, and the north one-half mile of 392nd Avenue east of the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA.

A proposed action may evolve during the NEPA process as the agency refines its proposal and gathers feedback from the public, tribes, and other agencies. Therefore, the final proposed action may be different from the original. The proposed action will be finalized at the conclusion of the public comment period for the EA.

Background

In April 1958, Congress amended the 1934 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, commonly referred to as the Duck Stamp Act (16 U.S. Code 718d[c]). The 1958 amendment established the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program (SWAP), which was authorized to use proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps and import duties collected on arms and ammunition for permanently protecting productive migratory bird habitat in the United States. The habitat protected under the SWAP consists of small wetlands and surrounding grassland habitat,

primarily in the U.S. portion of the Prairie Pothole Region in the Great Plains. Through the SWAP, the Service purchases fee title to lands or acquires minimally restrictive perpetual grassland and wetland conservation easements from willing sellers in high priority WPAs. These easements allow landowners to maintain working agricultural lands while protecting grass and wetland resources. Easements are purchased using proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamp and import duties collected on arms and ammunition. WPAs acquired through the SWAP are managed by staff in the Service's 38 WMDs, which are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).

In 1962, the Service created the WMDs as administrative organizations to manage WPAs and wetland/grassland easements to conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitat for the continuing benefit of the American people. Fee title WPAs are open to hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. In addition to actively managing all WPAs and wetland/grassland easements in a multicounty area, WMDs also work closely with the private landowners, government and nongovernment organizations, businesses, and other federal agencies in their districts to improve wildlife habitat.

The Huron WMD, formally headquartered in the town of Huron, South Dakota, was created on May 31, 1992, and encompasses wetlands and grasslands that were previously under the management of both the Lake Andes and Sand Lake WMDs. The purpose of the Huron WMD, as expressed in December 2006 by the Region 6 Assistant Regional Director, is "to assure the long-term viability of the breeding waterfowl population and production through the acquisition and management of waterfowl production areas, while considering the needs of other migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and other wildlife" (Service 2012).

A Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was approved for the Huron WMD (and two neighboring WMDs in South Dakota) in January 2012. The goals of the plan are as follows:

- Native Prairie – Conserve, restore, and improve the biological integrity and ecological function of the native prairies to support healthy populations of native plants and wildlife and promote the natural role of fire and grazing in shaping and managing these landscapes.
- Planted Grasslands – Manage planted grasslands to contribute to the production and growth of continental waterfowl populations, and other migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and other wildlife.
- Wetlands – Protect, restore, and enhance prairie pothole wetlands to support diverse plant communities and provide habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wetland-dependent wildlife.
- Research and Monitoring – Provide a learning platform that uses science, monitoring, applied research, and adaptive management to advance understanding of the Prairie Pothole Region and management of these areas.
- Consumptive Uses – Provide visitors with quality opportunities to enjoy hunting, fishing, and trapping on WPAs and expand their knowledge and appreciation of the prairie landscape and the NWRS.
- Non-consumptive Uses – Provide visitors with quality opportunities to enjoy, observe, photograph, and appreciate the prairie ecosystem while expanding their knowledge of and support for the NWRS.
- Operations and Administration – Through effective communication and innovative partnership, secure and efficiently utilize funding, staffing, and volunteer programs for the benefit of all natural resources in the district.

- Partnerships – Promote and develop partnerships with landowners, public and private organizations, and other interested individuals to maintain, restore, and enhance a diverse and productive landscape in the Prairie Pothole Region.
- Environmental Education and Interpretation – Provide quality educational opportunities for persons of all abilities to learn about, understand, and appreciate prairie landscapes and the role of the NWRS.

In addition, as part of the NWRS, WMDs are guided by the same rules, regulations, and requirements as for a national wildlife refuge. Relevant guidance includes the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, and selected portions of the CFR and Fish and Wildlife Service Manual.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

Until January 2021, the Huron WMD/WAO occupied 6,533 square feet of office space in the Federal Building in downtown Huron, South Dakota, under a lease with the General Services Administration (GSA). The Service made the decision to terminate its GSA-leased space in downtown Huron for several reasons, including increased lease costs, COVID-19 virus concerns, and the fact that the space could not accommodate the entire staff. Also, the office's location on the third floor of the Federal Building was not readily visible to, nor easily found by, the public and, thus, did not meet the dual needs of a rural constituency and the community's growing minority population. Other important considerations for lease termination were that the office space was too small for displaying educational and recreational exhibits about the WMD, and its urban location was too detached from the WMD's grasslands and wetlands to help the Service demonstrate the importance of these natural resources to the ecology of South Dakota.

During the COVID-19 virus pandemic, and after the termination of the GSA lease, some Huron WMD/WAO staff members began working from a rented construction trailer located within the Huron WMD shop area on the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA. Many staff members continue to work remotely from their residences. The rented construction trailer has limited space and minimal amenities. Its small size cannot accommodate all of the WMD/WAO staff, nor is it conducive to meetings with members of the public. Furthermore, educational materials on the WPAs within the district cannot be displayed.

The purpose of this proposed action is to construct a multipurpose building and visitor contact station for the Huron WMD/WAO that offers opportunities for collaboration and coordinated management between the WMD/WAO staff and the public (e.g., primarily landowners, hunters, birdwatchers, photographers, school groups, and hikers) and provides wildlife-dependent educational and recreational opportunities that do not currently exist within 50 miles of the facility's proposed location. The facility would include both administrative office spaces and a visitor contact station. The proposed visitor contact station would allow WMD/WAO staff to interact with visitors and provide space for exhibiting environmental educational displays and interpretive information about the Prairie Pothole Region. The building site's proximity to U.S. Highway 14 would make it readily visible to members of the public seeking information about private land conservation programs and outdoor recreational and wildlife-dependent opportunities within the Huron WMD. The combination of office space and a visitor contact station would

promote the Service's ability to build strong relationships and partnerships with surrounding diverse communities.

The need for the proposed action is to meet the WMD/WAO's mission, which is to partner with the public in conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Specific goals for achieving this mission are expressed in the Huron WMD's CCP (Service 2012). The proposed facility would also support the WMD/WAO management in effectively and efficiently managing the district's waterfowl and other migratory birds, as well as conserving and restoring wetland and grassland habitats for the benefit of prairie pothole ecology. In addition, the proposed facility would meet the Service's expressed priority to directly connect with the growing minority community residing in the Huron WMD and address racial equity by investing in infrastructure inclusive to all members of the community at large.

Alternatives

Alternative A – Remain in Rented Construction Trailer/Continue Remote Telework (No Action Alternative)

Under Alternative A (the No Action Alternative), the current working situation for the WMD/WAO staff would continue. This consists of a combination of office space in a rented construction trailer for some staff members and continued remote telework for the remainder of the staff. As previously mentioned, this working situation presents several challenges to the WMD/WAO staff: (1) the rented construction trailer is small with minimal heating and cooling and other amenities; (2) there is no possibility of full staff gatherings; (3) there is limited space to accommodate meetings with the public on WMD/WAO business; (4) there is no space available to establish the visitor contact station needed for the WMD to meet its environmental education mission; and (5) the Service would have a continued obligation to fund a rented construction trailer with inadequate space and pay associated utility costs.

Alternative B – Construct Multipurpose Building and Visitor Contact Station at Weaver Waterfowl Production Area (Proposed Action Alternative)

Under the Alternative B (Proposed Action Alternative), the Service would construct a new multipurpose building and visitor contact station for Huron WMD/WAO on fee title land within the Weaver WPA. The building site is approximately six miles west of Huron, South Dakota, and south of U.S. Highway 14 by approximately 300 feet. The proposed project would involve disturbance and alteration of approximately five to seven acres of a former agricultural field, a portion of which was previously used as a borrow area during construction activities associated with U.S. Highway 14. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. No wetlands or native sod would be disturbed at this proposed building site.

The new multipurpose building and visitor contact station would consist of an 8,500-square-foot, one-story structure on a slab foundation. The facility would have a dual purpose: (1) serve as the administrative offices for the Huron WMD/WAO; and (2) provide for a visitor contact station. A concrete patio along the southern and eastern sides of the building would provide outdoor meeting space and a wildlife observation area. The building would be open to the public from 8:00 a.m.

through 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Appendix B contains maps and preliminary building design plans (95 percent design).

The administrative offices would be used by WMD/WAO staff. Offices and common areas would be provided. The visitor contact station would house displays describing wildlife, wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities within the WMD, and interpretive exhibits to help visitors develop an appreciation of the natural world and the conservation needs of the Prairie Pothole Region. Exhibits would be designed to be readily and easily understood by all members of the public (i.e., designed to be inclusive to underrepresented community members to include displays in multiple languages, interpretation/translation, etc.). Meeting space would be available for hosting public outreach and environmental education events by the WMD/WAO staff and by conservation groups, including the Friends of the Maga Ta-Hohpi (a cooperating association with the Huron WMD).

The proposed building would feature a modern architectural design with a metal roof and cementitious siding that would blend into the landscape using natural colors. A clerestory wall would allow natural light to illuminate the interior space and allow air to flow and circulate. The building would be heated and cooled using a highly efficient hydronic system. A hydronic system uses a fluid that is recirculated through pipes in the floor and/or walls. In the winter, the heated fluid would radiate heat, and, in summer, cool fluid would absorb heat energy. The sewage treatment system would include a septic tank and an evapotranspiration bed.

The proposed project would also include a gravel driveway leading from U.S. Highway 14 to a gravel parking lot with about 40 spaces. The parking lot would be capable of accommodating buses and campers/trailers. A half-acre stormwater retention basin would be situated at the eastern end of the parking lot for rainwater runoff control and protection of wetlands and groundwater on the Weaver WPA. Communications (e.g., telephone and fiber-optic cables) and electric utilities would enter the building site along the driveway from U.S. Highway 14. Mid Dakota Rural Water would supply potable water. The water supply line would be routed from the east for about 4,200 feet to the proposed building site through the adjacent Thesenvitz WPA and Weaver WPA (properties that are both owned in fee title by the Service). The proposed route would be maintained through upland grassland elevations and avoid wetlands. A trencher would be used to install the two-inch waterline. All utility lines would be buried, and utility rights-of-way restored to natural conditions by reseeding with native grass and forbs.

A safety/no hunting zone would be established around the proposed facility to ensure public safety. The proposed safety/no hunting zone would encompass approximately 80 acres located in Township 110N, Range 63W, Section 3N1/2 and 3NE1/4.

The proposed project would also include improvements to existing nearby township roads in cooperation with the Hartland Township Board and funding through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). These road improvements would involve the gravel resurfacing of 393rd Avenue, 207th Street, and the northern one-half-mile of 392nd Avenue near the Huron WMD shop complex to improve access to the accessible paved walking trail and visitor parking areas on the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA. The Service has chosen these roadway improvements instead of improving the intersection of 392nd Avenue with U.S. Highway 14 because improvements to that intersection would require a significant grade raise at U.S. Highway 14 (possibly two to three feet) and disturb a significant amount of wetland habitat.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) has approved the Service's application for a driveway and curb cut along U.S. Highway 14 to accommodate the proposed facility. The

SDDOT determined that traffic volumes along U.S. Highway 14 in the vicinity of the proposed facility did not warrant turning lanes. In accordance with Service guidance (Service 2018), signage would be provided on U.S. Highway 14 for safety purposes as follows:

- Directional signs notifying visitors on approach to the Huron WMD/WAO building would be placed in each direction on U.S. Highway 14 (coordinated with local and state authorities).
- Entrance signs would be placed in both directions of U.S. Highway 14 to give visitors enough time to slow their speed before the turn into the facility's driveway.

All construction work for the proposed project would be carried out by a qualified contractor selected through a competitive bid process in compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulations. All applicable federal, state, and local regulations would be adhered to. The proposed action is anticipated to start in summer 2022 and is anticipated to be complete by fall 2023. Timing of construction would ultimately be dependent on internal contracting processes and the availability of funding.

The following best management practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize habitat loss on the proposed building site:

- During construction, confine site disturbance to the smallest area practical to prevent unnecessary damage to vegetation and wildlife disturbance.
- Install silt fencing, as appropriate, and fiber rolls, if necessary, prior to initiating any ground disturbance.
- Establish construction staging areas and storage areas away from wetland areas and providing appropriate barriers (including silt fencing and fiber rolls) to ensure that no runoff from staging areas will drain into adjacent wetland areas. Construction equipment would neither be stored nor fueled or repaired in areas that drain into wetlands or other natural areas.
- Inspect all equipment for leaks immediately prior to the start of project activities and regularly during construction.
- Develop an emergency spill response plan prior to initiation of project construction, and maintain a spill kit on-site throughout the duration of the proposed project.
- Following construction, revegetate disturbed areas not covered by new infrastructure (e.g., buildings, parking lot, etc.), utilizing native species, to the greatest extent practical. A full reconstruction of the grassland habitat will occur within the unit around the building. This area was previously farmed and is currently dominated by non-native grasses; therefore, a reconstruction of high diversity native grassland will be implemented to improve the visitor experience and demonstrate habitat management techniques used to restore habitat to a functional grassland ecosystem state.

This alternative provides the best opportunity to ensure that the mission and purposes of the Huron WMD/WAO are carried out.

Alternative(s) Considered, but Dismissed from Further Consideration

Two alternatives were considered by the Service but dismissed from further consideration: (1) Construct the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact space at the Huron WMD shop complex within the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA; and (2) Lease office space for Huron WMD/WAO within Beadle County.

Construct the Multipurpose Building and Visitor Contact Space at Huron WMD Shop Complex:

Implementation of this alternative would collocate the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station with the Huron WMD shop complex at the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA. Both alternative sites on the WPA would result in potentially greater impacts on wetlands and native sod and require hunting restrictions for large areas similar to or greater than for Alternative B. In addition, collocating the office and shop may present challenges of security and safety considerations between regular WMD/WAO operations around the shop area and the public seeking access to the multipurpose building and visitor contact station.

The area of the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA near the shop complex offers few viable potential building sites (i.e., potential construction sites that would avoid disturbance of wetlands and/or native sod). The following building sites on the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA were considered by the Service:

- **Former Educational Building Site:** The former educational building is located about 1,800 feet to the west of the shop complex. The building has no utilities and is in poor structural condition. The Service is planning to demolish the structure for health and safety reasons. To access this potential building site, a new road would need to be built from 392nd Avenue that avoids the need for visitors to drive through the congested shop maintenance yard for safety purposes. Also, utilities would need to be installed (e.g., water, electrical, and communications) and a septic system. With construction of this road and installation of utilities, approximately seven to nine acres of land would be disturbed, which would include both wetland and diverse native grassland. About one to two more acres would be disturbed with implementation of this alternative than would be disturbed under Alternative B. In addition, under this alternative approximately 80 acres would need to be closed to hunting around the building. The area along the potential access road is already within a closed area. Total acreage that would be closed to hunting would be 123 acres, including the 43 acres currently closed to hunting around the Service's shop complex. This would represent the same number of acres closed to hunting as the area that would be closed under Alternative B. This location did not offer anything superior to Alternative B and yet provided a less convenient location for the public to visit; therefore, it was not found suitable as an alternative.
- **North of the Shop Complex Site:** Another possible building site within the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA is on higher ground (Township 111N, Range 63W, Section 34NE1/4 and 34NE1/4) immediately north of the shop complex. Construction on this site would not disturb wetland or native sod, but to avoid the congested shop area, an access road connecting to 392nd Avenue would need to be routed through an existing wetland, and the area would not be suitable in size for the building site and parking lot. This alternative would result in five to seven acres of land disturbance, about the same size as would be required for Alternative B. Selection of this site would also require closure of 12 acres from hunting for the building itself. The total area that would be closed to hunting for this building site would be 55 acres (including the 43 acres currently closed to hunting around the Service's shop complex), about 68 less acres than is proposed for Alternative B. However, as stated previously, the area does not provide sufficient size for the building site and parking lot without having negative impacts on wetlands. Therefore, this location was not found suitable as an alternative.

For both of these alternative sites at the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA, 392nd Avenue would need to be improved to avoid flooding between U.S. Highway 14 and the Service's shop complex. As previously mentioned, improvements to 392nd Avenue would require a significant grade raise at U.S. Highway 14 (possibly two to three feet) and disturb a significant amount of wetland habitat.

Lease New Office Space for the Huron WMD/WAO. This alternative was dismissed because there are no buildings with leasable office space in Huron that could meet the purpose of and need for the WMD/WAO (i.e., with space sufficient to allow all staff to work in the same space, accommodate meetings with the public on WMD/WAO business, and house environmental education and outdoor recreation exhibits). Furthermore, any leased space in a building within downtown Huron would not provide the same wildlife observation experience that could be obtained with the proposed facility being located within the Weaver WPA. In addition, a GSA lease would cost more than \$100,000 per year, as compared to the previous lease terminated in January 2021.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This section is organized by affected resource categories and for each affected resource discusses: (1) the existing environmental and socioeconomic baseline in the action area for each resource, and (2) the effects and impacts of the proposed action and any alternatives on each resource. The effects and impacts of the proposed action considered here are changes to the human environment, whether adverse or beneficial, that are reasonably foreseeable and have a reasonably close causal relationship to the proposed action or alternatives. This EA includes the written analyses of the environmental consequences on a resource only when the impacts on that resource could be more than negligible and therefore considered an "affected resource." Any resources that would not be affected by the action have been dismissed from further analyses.

The Huron WMD encompasses eight counties in South Dakota: Beadle, Sanborn, Jerauld, Hand, Hyde, Hughes, Sully, and Buffalo (see map in Appendix B). As of July 2021, Service's real estate records show the district administers approximately 60 WPAs totaling 17,683 fee-owned acres, and wetland and grassland easements totaling approximately 100,000 acres and 250,000 acres, respectively.

The Huron WMD is primarily a mix of grassland and shallow wetland habitat. The proposed action is in the Weaver WPA, and the building site is a formerly undeveloped agricultural field that consists of a mix of cool season invasive grasses (e.g., smooth brome, *Bromus inermis*). Portions of the project area were previously disturbed and used as a borrow area during past construction activities on U.S. Highway 14 (see map of the general area and proposed project site in Appendix B). For more information regarding the general characteristics of the WMD's environment, please see Chapter 3 of the WMD's CCP (Service 2012), which is available online: <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/hur mad dsl.php>.

The resources in Table 1 below either (1) do not exist within the project area, or (2) would either not be affected or only negligibly affected by the proposed action.

Table 1. Potential for Adverse Impacts from Proposed Action and Alternatives

Resources	Not Applicable: Resource does not exist in project area	No/Negligible Impacts: Exists but no or negligible impacts	Greater than Negligible Impacts: Impacts analyzed in this EA
Wildlife and Aquatic Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habitat and Vegetation (Including Vegetation of Special Management Concern)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wilderness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Use and Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WMD Management and Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tables 2 through 6 provide the following for each resource of the Huron WMD:

1. A brief description of the relevant general features of the affected environment;
2. A description of relevant environmental trends and planned actions;
3. A brief description of the affected resources in the proposed action area; and
4. Impacts of the proposed action and any alternatives on those resources, including direct and indirect effects.

Table 2. Natural Resources

Wildlife and Aquatic Species
<p><i>Affected Environment Description</i></p> <p>The Huron WMD supports a diversity of wildlife species of the Prairie Pothole Region, including game and nongame species, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates, which are important contributors to the overall biodiversity on the district. Songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl breed within the district, and many more use the district as a migratory stopover.</p> <p>Rates of waterfowl production in the Prairie Pothole Region are identified using the Service’s Habitat and Population Evaluation Team- (HAPET) developed Waterfowl Breeding Pair Accessibility Map (also known as the thunderstorm map). During wet years, there is a high rate of production on the Weaver WPA, with greater than 100 pairs per square mile on the thunderstorm map. The rate of production is directly related to the grass and wetlands within the landscape.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description</i></p> <p>The 2012 CCP (Service 2012) described the potential for development in the Huron WMD as “subject to the most rapid agricultural growth and development and this growth was expected to continue.” Continued conversion of wetland habitat to agriculture could result in an overall decrease in the amount of habitat available to wildlife and aquatic species in southeastern South Dakota. However, the proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs. Conversion of wildlife and wetland habitat to agricultural use is unlikely to occur.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Impacts</i></p> <p>Alternative A: Under the No Action Alternative, a rental construction trailer at the WMD shop area within the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA would continue to be used as office space by some WMD/WAO staff members, with remaining staff members teleworking remotely. This alternative would have no impact on wildlife or aquatic species.</p> <p>Alternative B: Implementation of Alternative B would impact previously disturbed farmland, a portion of which was used as a borrow area during past highway construction activities, and within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. Although about five to seven acres of existing grassland stands would be affected, the proposed site avoids disturbing nearby wetlands. Therefore, implementation of Alternative B would not cause alterations in migratory patterns, daily movements, or breeding/nesting of waterfowl within the WPA and surrounding area; ducks would nest in the grass directly adjacent to the proposed building, and the use of the wetlands surrounding the proposed building would not be affected.</p> <p>Moreover, the grassland composition of the current stand includes invasive cool season grasses and planted natives. The areas disturbed during construction would be reseeded to native grass species and forbs upon completion of the project. This would result in improved habitat for wildlife in the future. The anticipated increase in visitor interaction, outreach, and education opportunities would improve the station’s ability to administer conservation on the larger landscape.</p> <p>The gravel resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would have no impact on wildlife and aquatic species in the project area.</p>

Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species

Affected Environment Description

There are four federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species that occur within the vicinity of the proposed project:

- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (Threatened) – Habitat: roost during summer singly or in colonies underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Spend winter hibernating in caves and mines, called hibernacula.
- Whooping crane (*Grus americana*) (Endangered) – Migration corridor is within project area. Habitat: shallow wetlands with emergent vegetation during migration.
- Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) (Threatened) – Habitat: Potentially could use wetlands in the area during migration.
- Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*) (Threatened) – Habitat: Is within the range for Topeka shiner habitat but the project area does not consist of any Topeka shiner streams or streams that potentially could provide habitat for Topeka shiners.

In addition to the listed T&E species, the following two candidate species may be found within the action area:

- Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) – Habitat: milkweed species for reproduction, diverse native grasslands for foraging, and large trees for roosting.
- Regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) – Habitat: diverse native grasslands.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

Climate change or warming in South Dakota, whether it results from anthropogenic or natural sources, is expected to affect a variety of natural processes and associated resources in the future. The complexity of ecological systems means there is significant uncertainty about the potential magnitude of climate change impacts, and localized effects are still a matter of debate. Current trends suggest that the average temperature in South Dakota is becoming warmer and that overall precipitation is increasing, as are the intensity of precipitation events (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2016). However, there is no definitive information on how exactly changes in climate would impact species populations. Potential impacts could include earlier stop overs in bird migration patterns, increased frequency of wildfires, habitat conversion, and decreased or increased water availability.

There are no planned actions in the area that, when combined with the likely effects of the proposed project, would have a negative compounding impact on the quality or availability of habitat to T&E species. Moreover, the proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.

Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species

Anticipated Impacts

Alternative A: Alternative A would result in no impacts on T&E and other special status species as no land disturbance would occur.

Alternative B: An Intra-Service Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation was conducted (see Appendix C), which resulted in a finding of No Effect. Alternative B would be unlikely to have any impact on the listed T&E species or candidate species that may exist in the area.

- Northern long-eared bats – There are no known roosting sites for this species in the proposed project area. No trees would be removed that could serve as summer roosts or maternal colonies, and forage should not be impacted. No effects are expected.
- Whooping cranes – This species is not likely to be found within the proposed construction area. Project work would be conducted close to a highway. No effects are expected.
- Red knot – The project area consists of a mix of invasive cool season grasses. All wetland areas would be avoided during construction. No effects are expected.
- Topeka shiner – The project area does not consist of any Topeka shiner streams or streams that potentially could provide habitat for Topeka shiners. No effects are expected.
- Monarch butterfly and regal fritillary – The proposed project area consists of a mix of invasive cool season grasses with few forbs currently present. Approximately five to seven acres of the existing grassland stand would be disturbed as a result of this project. The disturbed areas that are not developed as a result of the proposed project would be reseeded to a native grass and forbs mix upon completion of the project. No effects are expected for either candidate species.

The resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would have no impact on T&E or other special status species in the project area.

Habitat and Vegetation (Including Vegetation of Special Management Concern)

Affected Environment Description

As previously described, the proposed project site is formerly undeveloped agricultural field with no native sod. The site is covered with a mix of cool season invasive grasses (e.g., smooth brome, *Bromus inermis*). Bromegrasses are a substantial threat to prairies by forming monotypic stands that are resistant to restoration while decreasing diversity and altering nutrient cycling (Ulrich 2014). In addition, portions of the project area were previously disturbed and used as a borrow area during construction activities for U.S. Highway 14. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

Climate change or warming, whether it results from anthropogenic or natural sources, is expected to affect a variety of natural processes and associated resources in the future in South Dakota. The complexity of ecological systems means there is significant uncertainty about the potential magnitude of climate change impacts, and localized effects are still a matter of debate. Current trends suggest that the average temperature in South Dakota is becoming warmer and that overall precipitation is increasing, as are the intensity of precipitation events (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2016). However, there is no definitive information on how exactly changes in climate will impact species populations. Potential impacts could include earlier stop overs in bird migration patterns, increased frequency of wildfires, habitat conversion, and decreased or increased water availability.

There are no planned actions in the area that, when combined with the likely effects of the proposed project, would have a negative compounding impact on the quality or availability of habitat and vegetation. Moreover, the proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.

Anticipated Impacts

Alternative A: Alternative A would result in no impact to habitat or vegetation as no land disturbance would occur.

Alternative B: The proposed action would impact a previously disturbed farmland, a portion of which was used as a borrow area. Disturbance to the existing grassland stands is estimated at about five to seven acres. The grassland composition of the current stand includes invasive cool season grasses and planted natives. Since the proposed site would avoid disturbing nearby wetlands, there would be no alterations in migratory patterns, daily movements, or breeding/nesting of waterfowl within the Weaver or Thesenvitz WPAs. Ducks would nest in the grass directly adjacent to the proposed building, and the use of the wetlands surrounding the proposed building would not be affected.

In addition, a previously discussed, the grassland composition of the current stand includes invasive cool season grasses and planted natives. The areas disturbed during construction and installation of utilities would be reseeded to native grass species and forbs upon completion of the project. This would result in improved habitat for wildlife in the future. The anticipated increase in visitor interaction, outreach, and education opportunities would improve the station's ability to administer conservation on the larger landscape.

The resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would have no impact on habitat and vegetation in the project area.

Geology and Soils

Affected Environment Description

Topographically, the proposed project site is gently undulating with slopes ranging from three to six percent. It is previously disturbed farmland, a portion of which was used as a borrow area during U.S. Highway 14 construction activities. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. According to the Beadle County online soils map (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2022), the predominant soil classifications of the undisturbed soils on the project site are Houdek-Prosper and Houdek-Ethan loams. These soil types were formed in glacial till on uplands. They are well to moderately well-drained, but permeability is moderate to moderately slow. When these types of soils are disturbed, they must be properly managed to reduce/prevent wind or water erosion.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

There are no known environmental trends or planned actions that would affect soils in the project area. The proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs, which would remain undisturbed.

Anticipated Direct and Indirect Impacts

Alternative A: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts on geology and soils.

Alternative B: Impacts on soils at the proposed project site for the multipurpose building and visitor contact station would be minimized by the fact that the building would be sited primarily on the former borrow area. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. Impacts on soils would occur where any remaining topsoil is removed during building, parking lot, and stormwater retention basin construction, and installation of the communications and electrical utilities along the gravel driveway. The potentially adverse impacts of this ground disturbance would be temporary and minimized with application of BMPs to control erosion and fugitive dust. Post-construction efforts to restore disturbed areas by reseeding with native grasses and forbs would minimize long-term impacts.

The installation of the potable water supply line for 4,200 feet across the Weaver and Thesenvitz WPAs would be conducted using a trencher to minimize the amount of topsoil to be disturbed. The route for the pipeline would avoid wetlands. Consequently, impacts on soils would be negligible.

The resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would have no impact on soils in the project area.

Air Quality

Affected Environment Description

The entire state of South Dakota is in attainment for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified standards under the Clean Air Act for the following criteria pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, particulate matter, and lead. The primary emission sources in the project area include vehicles and agricultural-related equipment traveling along roads.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

There are no known environmental trends or planned actions that would affect air quality in the project area.

Anticipated Impacts

Alternative A: Under the No Action Alternative, existing activities in the project area would continue, including farming activities and the trend toward conversion of undeveloped land to agriculture uses would likely continue. However, because the proposed site is surrounding by WPAs, there is little likelihood of conversion occurring near the proposed project site.

Alternative B: The construction phases of the proposed project would likely result in minor and short-term impacts on air quality, anticipated to last for approximately nine to twelve months. These minor air quality impacts would be associated with vehicular emissions and fugitive dust from the use of heavy equipment and other vehicles at the building site, during roadway improvement activities, and along the proposed utility rights-of-way. As identified for geology and soils, implementation of BMPs to minimize fugitive dust and soil erosion would result in negligible short-term air quality impacts.

Operations of the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station following construction would generate some daily vehicular traffic by staff and visitors. However, the number of vehicle trips forecasted to access the building site on a daily basis (75–100 trips) would be insufficient to generate more than a negligible impact on air quality.

The proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station would be heated using a hydronic heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, powered by a propane boiler. The benefits of this radiant heating and cooling system are its high efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and low carbon dioxide emissions.

In conclusion, neither construction nor operation of the proposed project, including the resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street, would contribute more than a negligible impact on air quality at the project site or in the surrounding area.

Water Resources

Affected Environment Description

This discussion of water resources in the project area includes water bodies, wetlands, and water quality. Areas of wetlands surround the proposed project site, but there are no known standing water bodies or streams in the vicinity. Ditches line either side of U.S. Highway 14.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

There are no known environmental trends or planned actions that would affect water resources, including water quality and wetlands in the project area. The proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.

Anticipated Impacts

Alternative A: There would be no land disturbance, and consequently, no impacts on water resources under Alternative A.

Alternative B: The proposed project has been designed to avoid potential impacts on water resources by implementing the following: (1) siting the parking lot within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass to minimize habitat disturbance; (2) including a stormwater retention basin on the eastern side of the parking lot for collecting and managing runoff to protect surrounding wetlands and groundwater; (3) routing the potable water supply line through the Thesenvitz WPA and Weaver WPA on higher elevation to avoid wetland disturbance; and (4) including an evapotranspiration bed as part of the septic system design for the proposed facility. An evapotranspiration bed system is unique in its ability to dispose of wastewater in an environmentally beneficial way into the atmosphere through evaporation from the soil surface and/or transpiration by plants, without necessarily discharging it to the surface water or groundwater. The minor alteration of the ditch along U.S. Highway 14 to accommodate the entrance into the project site would not significantly affect water flow along the road. Therefore, potential impacts on water resources associated with this alternative would be negligible.

Since proposed construction activities would involve disturbing one or more acres of land at the proposed project site, coverage under South Dakota's General Permit Authorizing Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities (General Permit) would be required in accordance with the Clean Water Act (South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources 2021). Compliance with the General Permit would ensure that BMPs are applied during construction activities on the project site, during roadway improvements, and along utility rights-of-way to reduce soil erosion and runoff. BMPs would also address control and management of spills from construction equipment.

Lastly, the resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would have no impact on soils in the project area.

Table 3. Affected Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor Use and Experiences
<p><i>Affected Environment Description</i></p> <p>The WPAs in the Huron WMD offer outstanding opportunities for hunting, wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education. It is estimated that the Huron WMD (all WPAs in an eight-county area of southeastern South Dakota) estimated 19,000 visitors per year, mostly attributed to hunting (Service 2021).</p>
<p><i>Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description</i></p> <p>The Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi is a cooperating association with the Huron WMD that contributes volunteer service hours to the WMD and, in past years, has sponsored some environmental and recreational activities at the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA. This WPA is directly north of the proposed project site. Other than activities of the Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi and the proposed project, there are no additional known actions being planned that would be likely to increase or change the number of visitors in the area.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Impacts</i></p> <p>Alternative A: Under the No Action Alternative, visitors to the Huron WMD would continue to have little opportunity to learn about wildlife-dependent recreational activities at WPAs, be educated about environmental stewardship of the Prairie Pothole Region, or interact with staff to learn more about the resources offered.</p> <p>Alternative B: It is estimated that construction of the multipurpose building and visitor contact station could attract an additional 2,000 to 5,000 visitors per year to the Huron WMD's WPAs, bringing the total district visitation to as much as 24,000. Visitors could include student field trips from nearby schools to experience the natural resources around the proposed building and learn about the Prairie Pothole Region by touring the exhibits in the visitor contact station. The Friends of the Maga Ta-Hohpi could also sponsor events using the conference room and outdoor space at the proposed facility.</p> <p>Alternative B would beneficially impact the administration of WPAs in the Huron WMD by providing office space that could readily accommodate meetings with members of the community and better support the WMD/WAO staff with offices and conference space in an energy-efficient building. It would also greatly enhance visitor experiences at the Huron WMD. The new facility would contain a visitor contact station with exhibits that would place the WMD in the context of the surrounding landscape and highlight notable features. The facility would also provide WMD visitors with easy access to staff who can answer questions and provide additional information, which would produce a more robust visitor experience. The proposed project would also provide a place from which WMD/WAO staff could readily meet with and host environmental education programs and other public events to further engage with visitors and the community.</p> <p>The proposed gravel resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Street would improve visitor access to the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA.</p> <p>For public safety, a no hunting zone would be established around the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station. This no hunting zone would only encumber about 80 acres, which is about 3.5 percent of the hunting area available within the Weaver, Maga Ta-Hohpi, and Thesenvitz WPAs.</p>

Table 4. Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources
<p><i>Affected Environment Description</i></p> <p>A files search was conducted to identify any properties potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the proposed facility and the route of the proposed potable water supply line.</p> <p>Two historic farmsteads were recorded within a mile of the proposed facility with the nearest roughly one mile west of the project. Neither of these farmsteads would be affected by installation of the project.</p> <p>Four known historic farmsteads were recorded within a mile of the route of the potable water supply line. One farmstead is eligible for the NRHP, the nearest farmstead to the project area is one-half mile to the east, and no known cultural resources would be affected by installation of the waterline.</p> <p>A survey for cultural resources was conducted within the APEs at the building site and along the proposed potable water supply route. The cultural resources APE for the proposed building (including the driveway and parking lot/stormwater retention basin/septic system) was identified as 30 acres. The APE for the proposed waterline was identified as 50 feet on either side of the 4,200-foot pipeline route, about 10 acres. These APEs are considerably larger than the area expected to be disturbed to provide flexibility in current and future installation and planning activities.</p> <p>All bare soil areas within the respective APEs were investigated intensively. Vegetation was in spring conditions with a few green sprouts noted. Visibility was limited, but no shovel tests were conducted due to the intensity of previous disturbance from the borrow area. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. No eligible cultural resources were in the APE.</p> <p>The Service is working with the Tribes on this project and will complete the Tribal consultation before finalizing this EA, if requested by any Tribes.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description</i></p> <p>There are no known actions being planned that would be likely to impact cultural resources in the project area.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Impacts</i></p> <p>Alternative A: Alternative A would not result in any impacts on cultural resources.</p> <p>Alternative B: Based on the evaluation of the proposed building site and the route for the potable water supply line, the Service determined the proposed project would have No Effect on Historic Properties. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Service consulted with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on the proposed project site (not including the potable water supply line route) by a letter dated August 9, 2021. The South Dakota SHPO concurred with the Service’s determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” for the proposed undertaking on August 30, 2021. The Service sent a second letter to the South Dakota SHPO on January 26, 2022, for the proposed potable water supply line route. The SHPO concurred with the Service’s determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” for the pipeline route on February 3, 2022.</p> <p>The proposed gravel resurfacing of portions of 393rd and 392nd Avenues and 207th Streets to improve access to the Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA would have no effect on cultural resources.</p> <p>The Service is working with the Tribes on this project and will complete the Tribal consultation before finalizing this EA, if requested by any Tribes.</p>

Table 5. WMD Management and Operations

Land Use
<p><i>Affected Environment Description</i></p> <p>The proposed project would be set back about 300 feet to the south of U.S. Highway 14. The Senvitz WPA is adjacent to the east of Weaver WPA, and Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA directly to the north. The Huron WMD shop complex is located on Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA. The proposed project site is undeveloped grassland within Weaver WPA, approximately six miles west of the city of Huron. The site has been farmed in the past. During construction activities for U.S. Highway 14, the project site served as a borrow area. The site location is within a previously disturbed site that has low diversity grassland component dominated by non-native grass. There are some farmsteads along U.S. Highway 14, the nearest being within about one mile to the east.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description</i></p> <p>There are no known environmental trends or planned actions that would affect land use in the project area. The proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Impacts</i></p> <p>Alternative A: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no land use impacts.</p> <p>Alternative B: The proposed project is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs. The development of the project site for a multipurpose building and visitor contact station for use by the Service would be consistent with the mission of the Huron WMD/WAO.</p> <p>Operations of the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station following construction would generate some daily vehicular traffic on U.S. Highway 14 by staff and visitors. The current average daily traffic along U.S. Highway 14 is between 1,000 and 3,000 vehicles (SDDOT 2018). The proposed project could add about 75 to 100 daily vehicle trips to the highway volume. This change would not significantly impact existing traffic flow.</p> <p>The SDDOT has approved the Service's application for a driveway and curb cut along U.S. Highway 14 to accommodate the proposed facility. The SDDOT determined that traffic volumes along U.S. Highway 14 in the vicinity of the proposed facility did not warrant turning lanes. However, signage would be placed along U.S. Highway 14 to direct drivers of the presence of the multipurpose building and visitor contact station. This signage would provide drivers with a visual cue to slow down in anticipation of turning vehicles.</p>

Administration

Affected Environment Description

The Huron WMD/WAO staff currently consists of 30 permanent and seasonal employees. This staff is responsible for real estate activities (WAO) for the Huron WMD and the management and operation of the WMD, which is spread across an eight-county area of South Dakota.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

The proposed action is not expected to require a change in funding or staffing necessary to properly administer the Huron WMD/WAO.

Anticipated Impacts

Alternative A: Since the termination of the GSA lease for office space in the Federal Building in Huron, the Service currently spends about \$1,400 per month to rent a construction trailer located at Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA in the same area occupied by Huron WMD shop facilities. As previously mentioned, continued use of a rented construction trailer as office space presents some drawbacks for the WMD/WAO: (1) the rented construction trailer is small with minimal heating and cooling and other amenities; (2) there is no possibility of full staff gatherings; (3) there is limited space to accommodate meetings with the public on WMD/WAO business; and (4) there is no space available to establish the visitor contact station needed for the WMD to meet its environmental education mission.

Alternative B: The initial cost for Alternative B would be approximately \$5.5 million. Ongoing costs would include utilities and maintenance costs typical for similarly sized buildings. However, the building would have a highly efficient utility system and is designed to take advantage of natural light. By constructing this facility at the proposed project site, staff would have more convenient access to other Service facilities (e.g., shop and maintenance yard). Visitors to the WMD would have better access to staff and opportunities to learn about the WMD through educational exhibits and displays in the visitor contact station as well as a wetland observation area at the southern and eastern sides of the building.

Table 6. Socioeconomics

Local and Regional Economies
<p><i>Affected Environment Description</i></p> <p>As previously mentioned in this EA, the Huron WMD encompasses WPAs and wetland and grassland easements in eight counties in South Dakota: Beadle, Sanborn, Jerauld, Hand, Hyde, Hughes, Sully, and Buffalo. The current WMD headquarters are in Huron, South Dakota, the county seat of Beadle County. The proposed project site is also within Beadle County and is approximately six miles west of the city of Huron. The 2020 population of Beadle County was 19,149, which was 10 percent greater than the county’s 2010 population of 17,398. During this same period, race and ethnicity changed with significant increases in minority populations, specifically Asian and Hispanic populations. During the same period, 2010 to 2020, the city of Huron grew by 13 percent (Service 2019). Huron’s population comprises 75 percent of the entire county population. The city of Huron is a job center for Beadle County with the largest employer being Dakota Provisions, a meat production and processing company. This business opened in 2005. Outside of the city of Huron, the predominant industry in proximity to the proposed project is agriculture. The proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description</i></p> <p>There are no known actions being planned that would be likely to impact the local and regional economies in the project area.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Impacts</i></p> <p>Alternative A: Alternative A would not result in any impacts on the local economy.</p> <p>Alternative B: Construction of the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station would provide a short-term positive benefit to Beadle County in the form of construction labor and expenditures for materials. In the long term, the visitor contact station would benefit environmental tourism in the area.</p>

Environmental Justice

Affected Environment Description

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing the disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities.

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health and Safety Risks, requires all federal agencies to make it a priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children.

As noted above, the racial composition and ethnicity of the population of Beadle County changed between 2010 and 2020 with increases in the Asian and Hispanic populations. In Census Tract 9567 where the proposed project site is located, the Hispanic population experienced modest growth. Population data (2020) for this census tract may be found online at <https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/usfws-indicators/>. Nearly 99 percent of the population in this census tract identifies as white. Persons identifying as Hispanic comprise about 10.7 percent of the population of the census tract and American Indians comprise about 0.3 percent. No other minority populations are in proximity to the project site. About 4.8 percent of the census tract's population are living below the poverty level. However, no persons live in immediate proximity to the proposed multipurpose building and visitor contact station itself.

The Wolsey-Wessington Elementary School is the nearest school to the proposed project site. This school is about six miles to the north and west on U.S. Highways 281/14.

Environmental Trends and Planned Actions Description

The proposed project is intended to benefit minority populations by directly connecting with the growing minority community residing in the Huron WMD, thereby addressing racial equity by investing in infrastructure inclusive to all members of the community at large. The proposed project site is surrounded by fee title land owned by the Service and administered as WPAs.

Anticipated Impacts

Alternatives A and B: Given that there are no minority or low-income populations in proximity to the proposed project site, and that potential environmental impacts would be negligible or less than negligible, implementation of the proposed action would not result in any high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations.

In addition, as the nearest school is located about six miles from the proposed project site and potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action would be negligible or less than negligible, it can be concluded that implementation of the proposed action would not result in environmental health or safety risks that may disproportionately affect children. The proposed action would likely benefit the education of children by providing a visitor contact station with educational information on the environmental benefits of conserving prairie pothole ecology.

Summary of Analysis

The purpose of this EA is to briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Alternative A – Remain in Rented Construction Trailer/Continue Remote Telework (No Action Alternative)

As described above, the No Action Alternative results in relatively few environmental impacts. The most prominent adverse impact would be the continuation of a less than ideal working situation for the WMD/WAO staff, with some staff members working in a rented construction trailer and the remainder of the staff teleworking remotely. This presents several challenges to the WMD/WAO staff in meeting its mission as expressed in the 2012 CCP (Service 2012). Specifically, there is no possibility of full staff gatherings, limiting staff synergy; there is limited space to accommodate meetings with the public on WMD/WAO business; and there is no space available to establish the visitor contact station needed for the WMD staff to meet environmental education goals.

This alternative only partially meets the purpose and need previously described. While the current leased construction trailer does provide a minimal physical workspace for the Huron WMD/WAO, it is small and does not provide sufficient meeting space for members of the public to do business with the WMD/WAO staff or take part in environmental education activities.

Alternative B – Construct Multipurpose Building and Visitor Contact Station at Weaver Waterfowl Production Area (Proposed Action Alternative)

As described above, Alternative B (Proposed Action Alternative) would result in the conversion of a previously disturbed borrow area and former agricultural field that consists of a mix of cool season invasive grasses (e.g., smooth brome). The construction of the proposed facility would result in some ongoing disturbance to wildlife due to increased human activity on the Weaver WPA. However, these impacts would be temporary and cease with completion of construction in approximately a year, after which, the land would be reseeded to native grass species and forbs and disturbance to wildlife would be minimal to non-existent. There would be no or negligible impacts for all natural and human resources as assessed in this EA.

This alternative meets the purpose and need of the Service by providing a base of operations for the Huron WMD/WAO staff and a physical location that is visible to the public and offers a welcoming environment. The public be able to easily contact and meet with WMD/WAO staff participate in environmental education activities and other special events highlighting WMD resources.

List of Sources, Agencies, and Persons Consulted

- Beadle County Planning Commission (Conditional Use Permit)
- Endangered Species Act Section 7 Intra-Service Consultation
- South Dakota SHPO
- SDDOT

List of Preparers

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Dawn D. Roderique, Refuge Planner (Contract)

Tribal Consultation

The Service is working with the Tribes on this project and will complete the Tribal consultation before finalizing this EA, if requested by any Tribes.

Public Outreach

Huron WMD staff participated in a public meeting with the Beadle County Planning Commission on February 8, 2022, on a conditional use permit for the proposed facility. The Beadle County Planning Commission notified surrounding landowners of the Service's conditional use permit application by U.S. Mail on January 28, 2022. Two members of the public were present at the public meeting and two individuals submitted written comments on the proposed action. This Draft EA has addressed the concerns expressed by these two individuals.

The Draft EA will be posted on the Huron WMD website (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/huron-wetland-management-district>) with instructions on how to provide comments. Comments received on the Draft EA will be identified and responded to in the Final EA.

References

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- Service. 2021. *Refuge Annual Performance Plan for Huron Wetland Management District*.

Appendix A: Other Applicable Statutes, Regulations, and Executive Orders

This appendix lists all applicable statutes, regulations, and executive orders not otherwise addressed in this EA.

Cultural Resources

American Indian Religious Freedom Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 1996–1996a; 43 CFR Part 7

Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 U.S.C. 431–433; 43 CFR Part 3

Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. 470aa–470mm; 18 CFR Part 1312; 32 CFR Part 229; 36 CFR Part 296; 43 CFR Part 7

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470–470x-6; 36 CFR Parts 60, 63, 78, 79, 800, 801, and 810

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3001–3013; 43 CFR Part 10

Executive Order 11593 – Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 36 Fed. Reg. 8921 (1971)

Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites, 61 Fed. Reg. 26771 (1996)

Fish and Wildlife

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 668–668c, 50 CFR 22

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531–1544; 36 CFR Part 13; 50 CFR Parts 10, 17, 23, 81, 217, 222, 225, 402, 450

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, 16 U.S.C. 742a-m

Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 703–712; 50 CFR Parts 10, 12, 20, and 21

Executive Order 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, 66 Fed. Reg. 3853 (2001)

Natural Resources

Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species, 64 Fed. Reg. 6183 (1999)

Appendix B: Figures

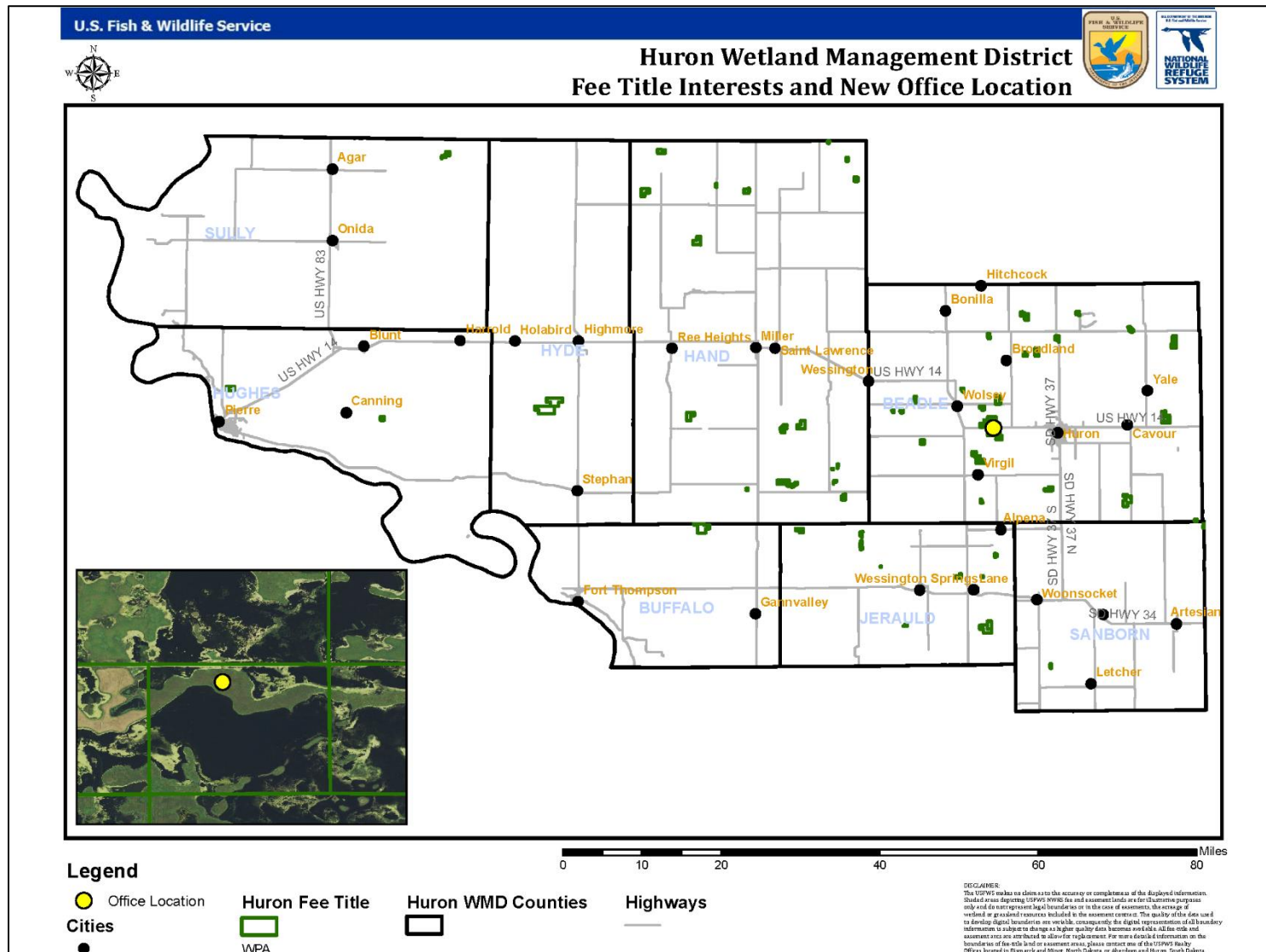


Figure 1. Regional Location Map

C:\gowl_pw\10393906\SA-CS-CV-27083.dwg



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

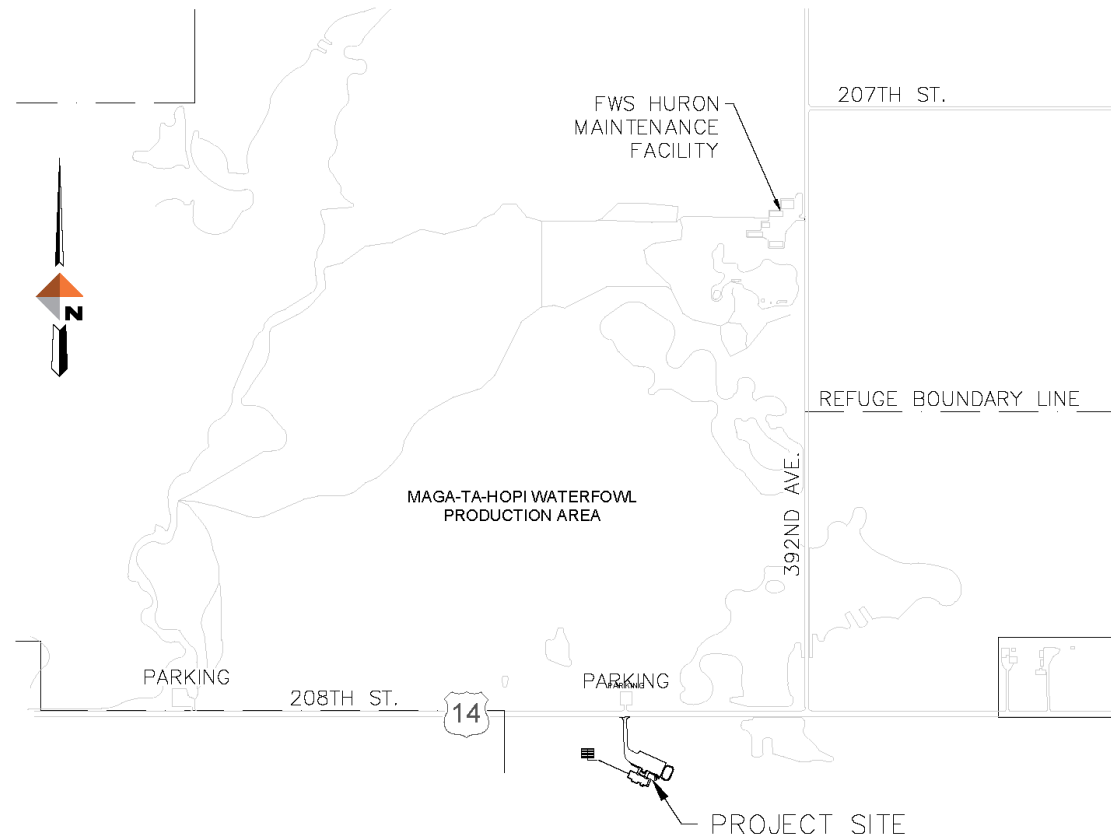
HURON WMD

MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING AND VISITOR CENTER

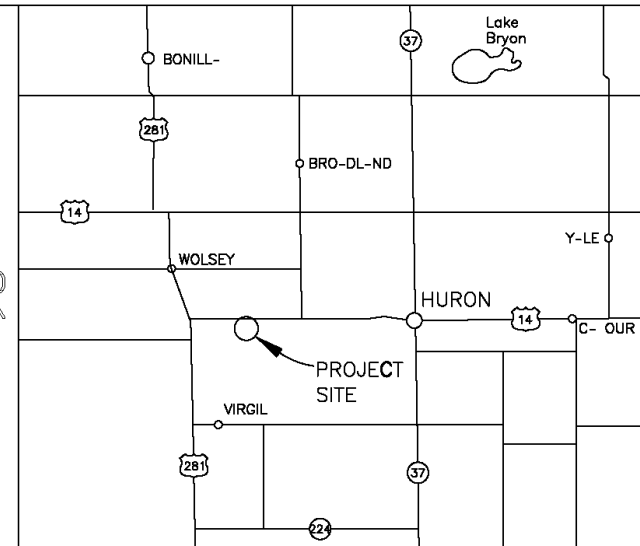
95% DESIGN

SHEET INDEX

SHEET #	SHEET NAME
C001	COVER SHEET
C002	CIVIL NOTES AND LEGEND
C101	DEMOLITION PLAN
C201	HORIZONTAL CONTROL PLAN
C301	CIVIL SITE PLAN
C401	GRADING PLAN
C402	GRADING DETAIL
C501	UTILITY PLAN
C502 TO C503	UTILITY DETAILS
C504 TO C506	SITE DETAILS
C507	DRIVEWAY AND PARKING LOT PROFILES
C601	EROSION CONTROL PLAN
C602	EROSION CONTROL NOTES
C603	EROSION CONTROL DETAILS
A001	ABBREVIATIONS AND MOUNTING HEIGHTS
A002	LIFE SAFETY AND CODE ANALYSIS
A100	GROUND FLOOR PLAN
A101	ROOF PLAN
A120	REFLECTED CEILING PLAN
A200	BUILDING ELEVATIONS
A300	BUILDING AND WALL SECTIONS
A301 TO A303	WALL SECTIONS
A400	ENLARGED FLOOR PLANS
A401 TO A402	INTERIOR ELEVATIONS
A403	ADA SIGNAGE
A500 TO A501	INTERIOR DETAILS
A510 TO A511	EXTERIOR DETAILS
A600	DOOR SCHED., DOOR & WINDOW ELEV.
A800	ROOM FINISH FLOOR PLAN
A801	FURNITURE PLAN
S101	GENERAL STRUCTURAL NOTES
S201	STRUCTURAL FOUNDATION PLAN
S301	MAIN LEVEL FRAMING PLAN
S401	ROOF FRAMING PLAN
S501 TO S503	STRUCTURAL SECTIONS AND DETAILS
M001	MECHANICAL COVER SHEET
M002 TO M004	MECHANICAL SCHEDULES
M100	UNDERFLOOR MECHANICAL HVAC PLAN
M101	FIRST FLOOR MECHANICAL HVAC PLAN
M102	FIRST FLOOR MECHANICAL PIPING PLAN
M103	ROOF MECHANICAL PLAN
M104	MECHANICAL ZONE PLAN
M201	MECHANICAL SECTIONS AND ENLARGED PLANS
M301 TO M304	MECHANICAL DETAILS
E001	ELECTRICAL COVER SHEET
E002	ELECTRICAL SCHEDULES
E101	ELECTRICAL POWER AND SPECIAL SYSTEMS PLAN
E102	ELECTRICAL LIGHTING PLAN
E301 TO E302	ELECTRICAL DETAILS
ES101	ELECTRICAL SITE PLAN
P001	PLUMBING COVER SHEET
P101	FIRST FLOOR PLUMBING DOMESTIC WASTE AND VENT PLAN
P102	FIRST FLOOR PLUMBING DOMESTIC WATER PLAN
P103	ROOF PLUMBING PLAN
P301 TO P302	PLUMBING DETAILS
PS101	PLUMBING SITE PLAN



REVISIONS			
REV	D - TE	DESCRIPTION	BY



VICINITY MAP

NO SCALE

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

REGIONAL ENGINEER	DATE
PROGRAM SUPERVISOR	DATE
ASST. REGIONAL DIR.	DATE
FACILITIES	DATE
SAFETY	DATE
CULTURAL RESOURCES	DATE

NOTE TO BIDDERS

ANY PRINT ACCOMPANYING THIS INVITATION TO BID MAY BE A REDUCED REPRODUCTION OF THE WORKING DRAWINGS. IF LINE BELOW DOES NOT MEASURE SIX INCHES IN LENGTH, THE INDICATED SCALES ARE TO BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
REGION 6 ENGINEERING - DENVER, COLORADO

HURON

WMD

BEADLE COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING AND VISITOR CENTER

COVER SHEET

DESIGNED MH	DRAWN JB	CHECKED BD
DATE 2022.03.31	DRAWING NO. 00-00-000-00-000	SHEET 1 OF 69

Figure 2. Huron WMD Multipurpose Building and Visitor Center 95% Design Drawing Cover Sheet Showing Project Location

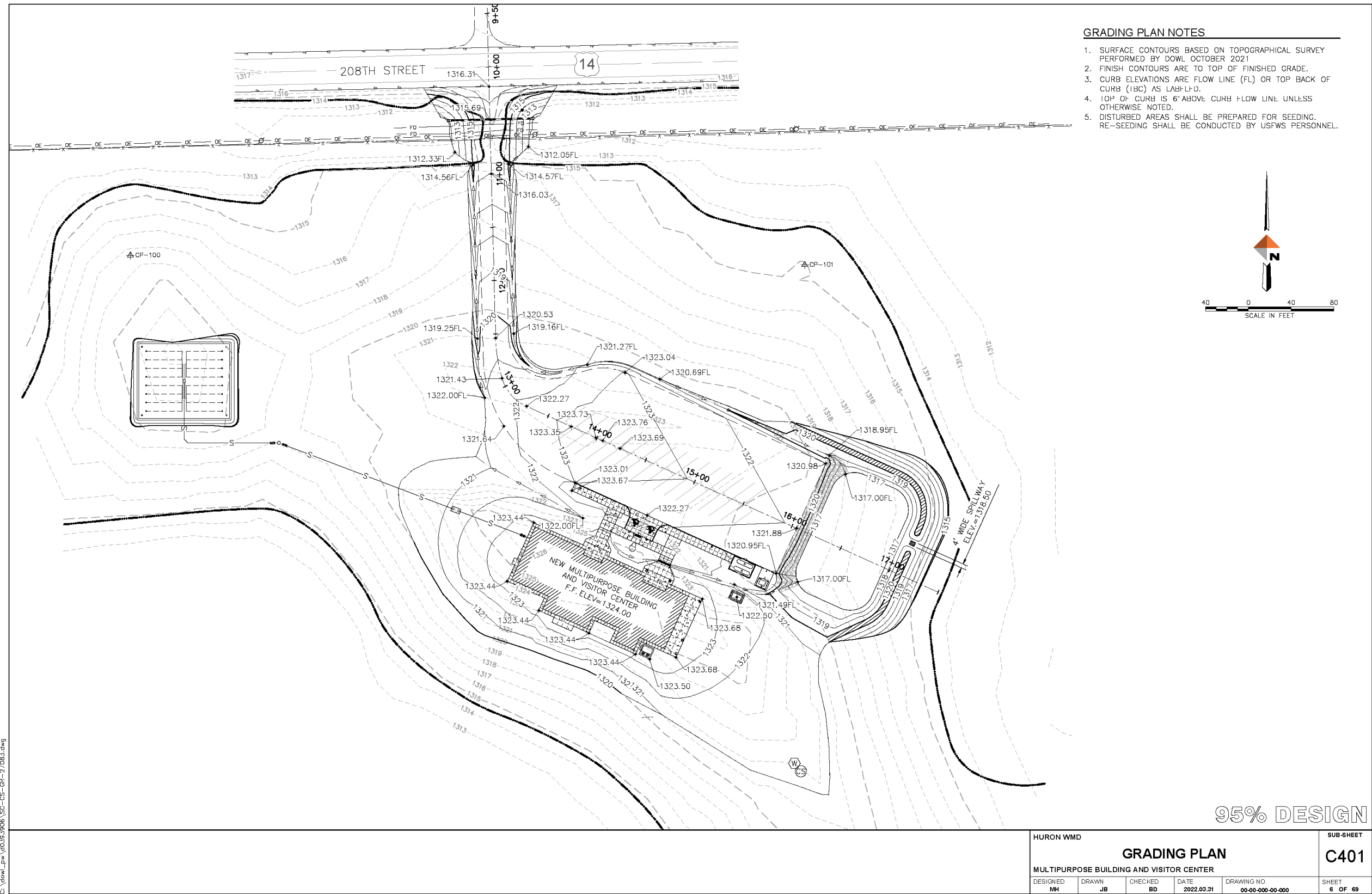


Figure 3. Huron WMD Multipurpose Building and Visitor Center 95% Design Grading Plan Showing Project Site Plan

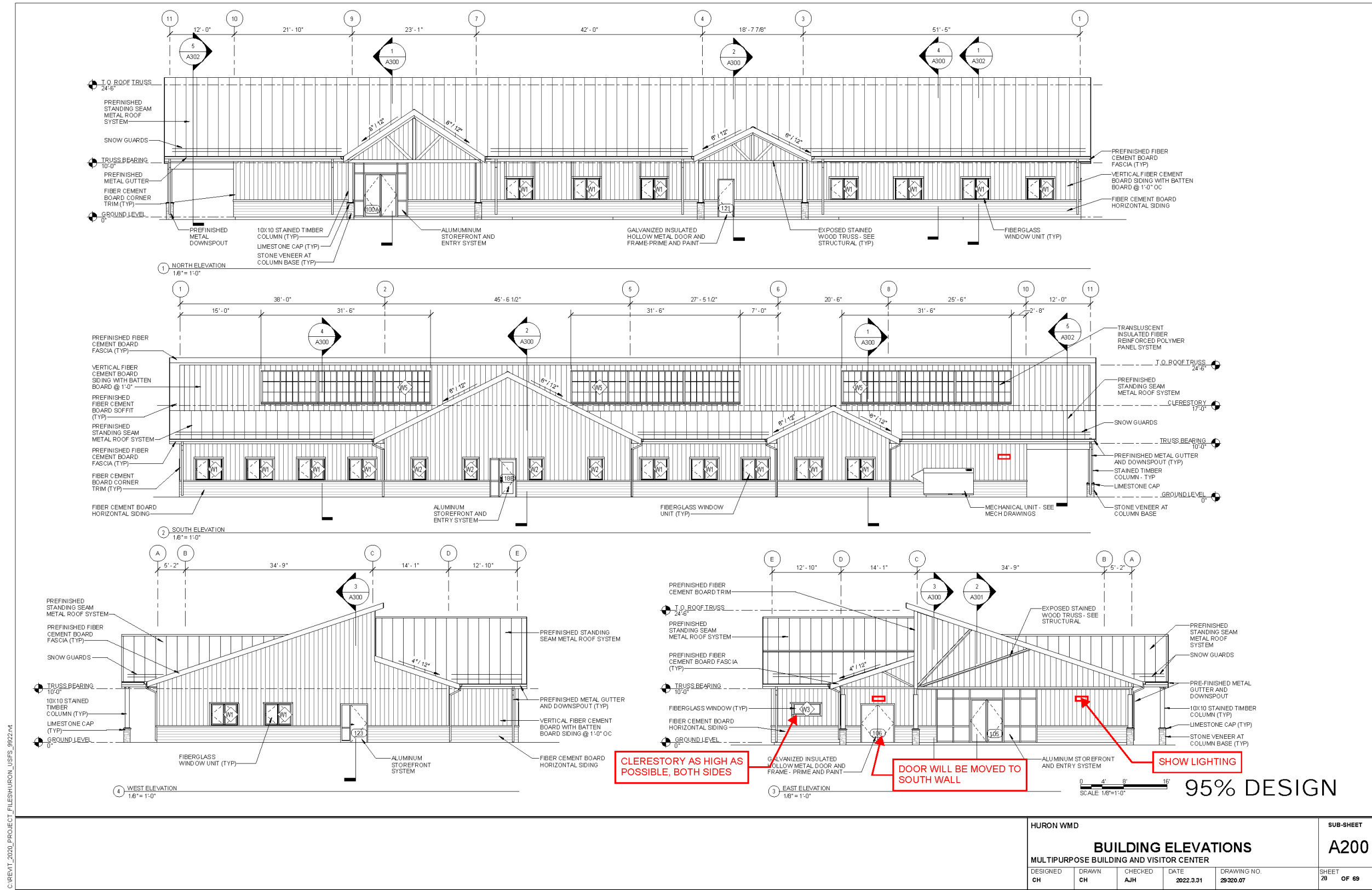


Figure 4. Huron WMD Multipurpose Building and Visitor Center 95% Design Building Elevations Showing Building Aesthetic

Appendix C: Correspondence



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501
Tel.: 701-355-8577 Fax: 701-355-8533
Email: karri_springer@fws.gov



July 29, 2021

ATTN: Section 106 Review and Compliance
Dr. Jenna Carlson-Dietmeier
South Dakota State Historical Society
Cultural Heritage Center
900 Governors Drive
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2217

Dear Dr. Carlson-Dietmeier,

Enclosed is project documentation regarding the Huron Wetland Management District (WMD) and Realty Division New Office Building Construction project (Project) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) planned in Beadle County, South Dakota (SD). The project is an undertaking since it is located on fee title Federal land and Federal funds will be expended. The lead Federal agency is the Service. As such, the FWS is conducting cultural resources compliance activities under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 regulations.

Based on a files search, previous sites were recorded within a mile of the proposed project area. The project area was surveyed. No evidence of historic properties was found. A determination of *No Historic Properties Affected* was recommended. See project documentation for further details.

Based on these results, the FWS recommends installation of the project as planned without further cultural resources work; However, if cultural resources are discovered during installation, I recommend halting construction, contacting FWS immediately and awaiting further recommendations. Your review and comments concerning this project are requested in writing. If there are questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

**KARRI
SPRINGER**

Digitally signed by KARRI
SPRINGER
Date: 2021.07.29 11:13:18
-05'00'

KARRI L. SPRINGER
ND/SD Zone Archeologist

Enclosures: Cultural Resources Inventory Short Report - 21.SD.HUR.004, internal review form & files search document

USFWS BISMARCK FIELD OFFICE
CLASS III SURVEY REPORT – SHORT FORM

Report Title: 2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Office Construction Cultural Resources Inventory,
 Beadle County, South Dakota
Agency Sponsor: USFWS
Program: Refuges

Principal Investigator: _____
 Karri L. Springer
Report Date: 7/29/2021

PROJECT INFORMATION

FWS Station Huron WMD	Ownership Federal	Files Search Known Sites on CR Map	Project Location 6 mi W of Huron, SD	APE Acres 4
Dimensions 270' x 570' APE	Named buttes nearby None	USGS Quadrangle Virgil	UTM Zone 14	
Project Purpose Provide office space and visitor contact area for personnel	Section 3	Township T110N	Range R63W	

SURVEY INFORMATION

Survey Date April 20, 2021	Field Personnel Karri L. Springer, ND/SD Zone Archeologist, Bismarck FO			
Surveyed Practices New headquarters construction	Temp – Degrees F 40	Sky Mostly Cloudy	Wind Light	Precipitation None
Landuse WPA, Previously Cultivated	Soil Visibility 25	Transect Pattern Curvilinear, Back & Forth	Transects in Feet 50	
Notable Vegetation Big Bluestem, Bromegrass, Wetland Vegetation	Access Highway			
Grade % 3-6 - Gently Sloping/Undulating	Existing Disturbances Rodent Activity, Borrow Area (large with berms - covers most of the APE), Cultivation			

Found Noted recent materials such as: duck parts (wings, feathers, skeletal elements, feet), shotgun shells, highway garbage, and two older wooden fence posts along the wetland edge.	Author's Abbreviated Recommendations Install
--	--

Author's Comments

Project Notes: See Notes and Recommendations in cultural resources review form for files search details. Professional survey for the project was recommended due to location and potential project disturbance. Survey Notes: Survey area is considerably larger than the APE to provide flexibility in current and future installation and planning activities. Survey area is 30 ac. or 600' x 2150' in a rough 'L' shape. All bare soil areas were investigated intensively. Vegetation was in spring conditions with a few green sprouts noted. Visibility was limited, but no shovel tests were conducted due to the intensity of previous disturbance from the borrow area.

Survey Results:	No Eligible Properties: X
Recommendations:	No eligible cultural resources were located in the area of potential effect. Therefore, a NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED determination is recommended for this undertaking.
Negative Report Policy:	The negative report form is used to expedite Section 106 review and compliance when a Class III survey has been completed and no historic properties are located.

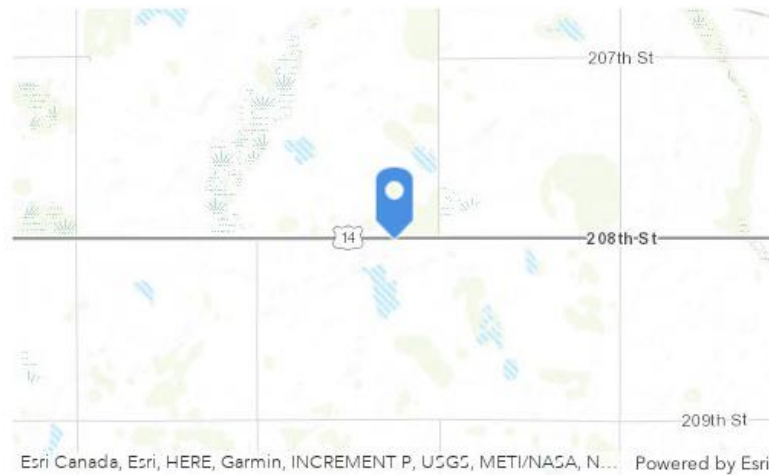
2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Headquarters

Township T110N, Range R63W, Section 3

7.5' USGS Quadrangle: Virgil, South Dakota

Fifth Principal Meridian

Generalized Project Location



2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Headquarters

Photographs



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 13:36:37 Lat: 44.37028 Long: -98.38181 Direction Degrees: 192.11

Photograph: View to west from the northeast photo point showing the north side of the project area from the wetland. The white vehicle is parked on the approach off the highway. The utility lines parallel the highway.



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 13:37:38 Lat: 44.37028 Long: -98.38181 Direction Degrees: 63.42

Photograph: View to the south from the same point as previous. Note the wetland at left.

2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Headquarters

Photographs



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 13:40:07 Lat: 44.37034 Long: -98.38304 Direction Degrees: 76.33

Photograph: View to the south from the approach off the highway. This is the north end of the planned APE. The berms from the previous borrow area are visible in the background.



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 13:42:37 Lat: 44.36976 Long: -98.38421 Direction Degrees: 6.14

Photograph: View to the east southeast showing the berm resulting from a previous borrow pit (near upper center). Photo taken from the slight rise on west side of survey area. Another wetland is visible at upper right.

2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Headquarters

Photographs



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 13:58:01 Lat: 44.3683 Long: -98.38143 Direction Degrees: 237.72

Photograph: View to the north northwest from near the southeast corner of project. Note that the vegetation appears to be mainly bromegrass (both last year's growth and a few spring sprouts).



Date: 2021/04/20 Time: 14:00:48 Lat: 44.36913 Long: -98.3822 Direction Degrees: 235.02

Photograph: View to north northwest from atop the berm. Note the vehicle and the utility lines in the background along the highway.

2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD and Realty New Office Construction

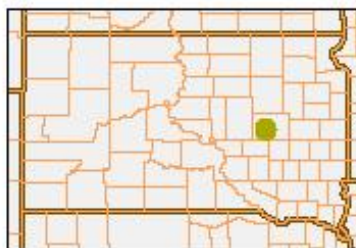
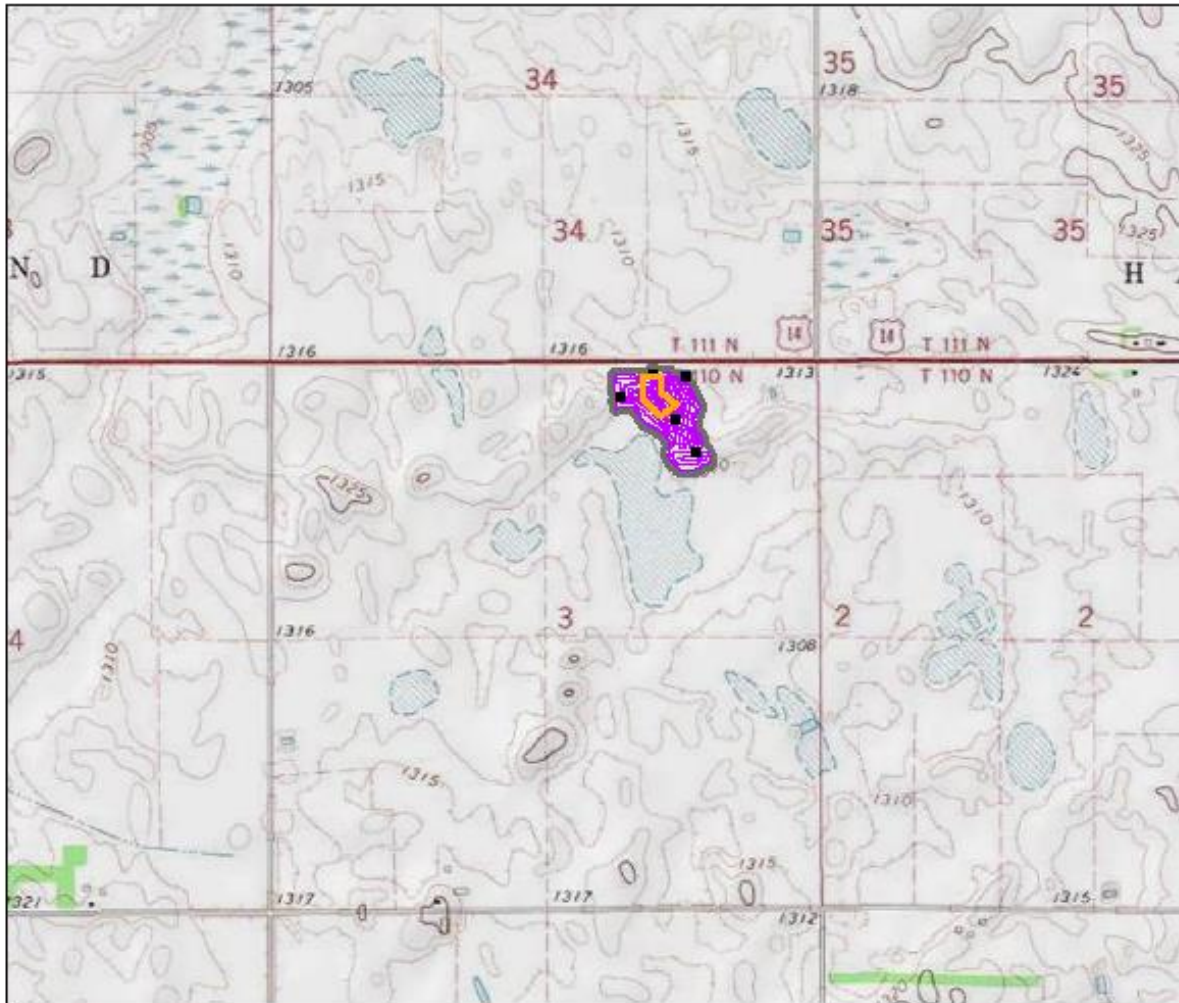
Township 110 North, Range 63 West, Section 3, Fifth Principal Meridian





Beadle County, South Dakota

7.5' USGS Quadrangle: Virgil

1:24,000

APE



-  APE
-  PHOTO POINT
-  AUTHOR'S TRANSECTS
-  SURVEY AREA



0 660 1,320 2,640 3,960 5,280 Feet

US Fish and Wildlife Service, ND/SD Zone Archaeologist, Bismarck, ND

July 2021

2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD and Realty New Office Construction

Township 110 North, Range 63 West, Section 3, Fifth Principal Meridian





Beadle County, South Dakota

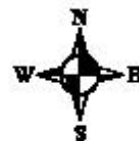
7.5' USGS Quadrangle: Virgil

Aerial Imagery

APE



-  APE
-  PHOTO POINT
-  AUTHOR'S TRANSECTS
-  SURVEY AREA



0 660 1,320 2,640 3,960 5,280 Feet

US Fish and Wildlife Service, ND/SD Zone Archaeologist, Bismarck, ND

July 2021



August 30, 2021

Ms. Karri Springer
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Mountain-Prairie Region
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501

SECTION 106 PROJECT CONSULTATION

Project: 210809029F – 21.SD.HUR.004 – Huron Wetland Management District and Realty
Division New Office Building Construction Project
Location: Beadle County
(USFWS)

Dear Ms. Springer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended). The South Dakota Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurs with your determination regarding the effects of the proposed undertaking on the non-renewable cultural resources of South Dakota.

On August 9, 2021, we received your letter dated July 29, 2021, and enclosures pertaining to the proposed office construction project. Included in the enclosures were the “Request for Cultural Resource Review” form, historic aerial images of the project area, your “Files Search – Notes and Recommendations,” and your Class III Survey Report – Short Form report titled “2021.SD.HUR.004 Huron WMD/Realty New Office Construction Cultural Resources Inventory, Beadle County, South Dakota.” Your report indicates that no cultural resources were identified during the survey efforts. Therefore, SHPO concurs with your determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” for the proposed undertaking.

Changes in the location and/or nature of project activities will require the submission of additional documentation pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.4 and/or 36 C.F.R. § 800.11.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION { DOE.SD.GOV }

Please note that concurrence of the SHPO does not relieve the federal agency official from consulting with other appropriate parties, as described in 36 C.F.R. § 800.2(c).

If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties are found after the agency official has completed the Section 106 process, the agency official shall avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse effects to such properties and notify the SHPO and Indian tribes that might attach religious and cultural significance to the affected property within 48 hours of the discovery, pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.13.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jenna Carlson Dietmeier at Jenna.CarlsonDietmeier@state.sd.us or at (605)773-8370. Your concern for the non-renewable cultural heritage of the state is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ted M. Spencer
State Historic Preservation Officer



Jenna Carlson Dietmeier
Review & Compliance Coordinator

Springer, Karri L <karri_springer@fws.gov>

Wed 1/26/2022 8:58 AM

To: Carlson Dietmeier, Jenna <Jenna.CarlsonDietmeier@state.sd.us>

Cc: Beyer, Jonathan <jonathan_beyer@fws.gov>; Grunig, Matthew R <matthew_grunig@fws.gov>

Hi Jenna,

Attached is documentation regarding the Rural Water Pipeline for the Huron WMD/WAO Headquarters project. I am requesting NHPA Section 106 comment on the findings. The legal location is T110N, R63W, Sections 2 & 3 in Beadle County, SD. The files search was positive in that four known farmsteads were recorded within a mile of the project. One farmstead is eligible for the NRHP and the nearest farmstead to the project area is 1/2 mile to the east. No known cultural resources will be affected by installation of the project. The project will occur within a previously cultivated area. A previous survey by the author overlaps the west end of the APE. The project is located on fee title WPA USFWS land and the project will be installed using USFWS funds and approvals. The USFWS is the lead Federal agency for the project. I recommend installation of the project as planned under a 'No Historic Properties Affected' determination.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Have a good day,

Karri j

Karri L. Springer
ND/SD Zone Archeologist
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501
Phone: 701-355-8577
Mobile: 720-556-3844 j
karri_springer@fws.gov j

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: REGION 6
REQUEST FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE REVIEW**

22.SD.HUR.003

Please complete this form and send it to one of the following individuals:

ND, SD	Karri Springer (Karri_Springer@fws.gov)	701.355.8577 (Bismarck)	720.556.3844 (cell)
UT, WY, MT	Allison Parrish (Allison_Parrish@fws.gov)	406.994.9949 (Bozeman)	406.404.4137 (cell)
CO, NE, KS	Meg Van Ness (Meg_VanNess@fws.gov)	303-236-8103 (Denver)	303.319.1229 (cell)

NOTE: Attach a topographic map showing the specific project location and Area of Potential Effect.
Project maps, air photographs, and photographs are also useful.

Project Identification									
Project Name Rural water installation project – Huron WMD/WAO Office Construction Project									
USFWS Program	Refuges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PFW	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specify		
Land Ownership	Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	State	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
Specify Weaver and Thesenvitz Waterfowl Production Areas									
USFWS Contact Name Matthew Grunig					Contact Phone Number 605-354-0533				
Your Project Number N/A					RPI Number N/A				
Other agency/organization involved?		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specify			
Date of Request 1/25/2022					Date you want to start the project Spring/Summer 2022				
Project Location									
State	SD	County	Beadle	Nearest Town (distance and direction) Huron (east 8 miles)					
Legal Location	Township	110	Range	63	Section(s)	2-NW1/4			
	Township	110	Range	63	Section(s)	3-NE1/4			
	Township		Range		Section(s)				
UTMs or Lat/Long.									
Project Size		Acres	10 ac.	Linear feet	~4,200'	Other	4200' pipe x 100' corridor = 10 ac.		
Project Description									
Describe any potential ground disturbance horizontal and vertical extent, equipment to be used, areas that will be inundated, borrow pits, etc.			Install approximately 4200' of underground rural waterline within USFWS fee owned WPAs (Weaver and Thesenvitz). This project is essential in order to provide water to the Huron WMD/WAO Office and Visitor Contact Station. The new pipeline will be installed at a depth of approximately 6' 6". The diameter of the water pipeline will be 2". Mid Dakota Rural Water proposes to install the waterline with a track hoe. As such, temporary disturbances to grasslands are anticipated. Areas disturbed by the project will be reseeded upon completion of the project.						
Describe proposed modifications to buildings or structures Include descriptions and dates of past modifications, if known			None						

Project Setting	
<p>Describe current environmental setting / land use</p> <p>Natural habitat Nature and extent of modifications – including grazing, cultivation, earth moving, etc.</p>	<p>The project is located in rural Beadle County adjacent to US Highway 14. Please see attached map for area affected. Grassland within the project area include replanted native and cool seasons grasses. Areas within the proposed project area have been previously disturbed (i.e. farmed).</p>
<p>Describe any known cultural resources in the project area or nearby</p>	<p>No known sites</p>
<p>Additional information concerning land status or condition</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	
Cultural Resource Review (to be completed by Cultural Resource staff)	
<p>Cultural Resource Staff Reviewer Karri L. Springer</p>	<p>Date Received 1/26/2022</p>
<p>Comments</p> <p>See attached. The files search was positive in that four known farmsteads were recorded within a mile of the project. One farmstead is eligible for the NRHP, the nearest farmstead to the project area is 1/2 mile to the east, and no known cultural resources will be affected by installation of the project. The project will occur within a previously cultivated area. A previous survey by the author overlaps the west end of the APE. The project is located on fee title WPA USFWS land and the project will be installed using USFWS funds and approvals. The USFWS is the lead Federal agency for the project. I recommend installation of the project as planned under a 'No Historic Properties Affected' determination. KLS 1/26/2022.</p>	

Huron WMD/WAO Office-Rural Water Installation Project

Beadle County, South Dakota

T. 110N., R.63W., Sec. 2 - NW1/4

T. 110N., R.63W., Sec. 3 - NE1/4



Legend

 Section Line





February 3, 2022

Karri L. Springer
USFWS ND/SD Zone Archeologist
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, ND58501

SECTION 106 PROJECT CONSULTATION

Project: 220126004F – 22.SD.HUR.003 – Rural Water Pipeline for Huron WMD/WAO
Headquarters Project
Location: Beadle County
(USFWS)

Dear Ms. Springer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended). The South Dakota Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurs with your determination regarding the effects of the proposed undertaking on the non-renewable cultural resources of South Dakota.

On January 26, 2022, we received your email with attachments pertaining to the proposed rural water pipeline installation in Beadle County. Based upon the information provided, SHPO concurs with your determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” for the proposed undertaking.

Changes in the location and/or nature of project activities will require the submission of additional documentation pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.4 and/or 36 C.F.R. § 800.11.

Please note that concurrence of the SHPO does not relieve the federal agency official from consulting with other appropriate parties, as described in 36 C.F.R. § 800.2(c).

If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties are found after the agency official has completed the Section 106 process, the agency official shall avoid,

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION { DOE.SD.GOV }

minimize or mitigate the adverse effects to such properties and notify the SHPO and Indian tribes that might attach religious and cultural significance to the affected property within 48 hours of the discovery, pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.13.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jenna Carlson Dietmeier at Jenna.CarlsonDietmeier@state.sd.us or at (605)773-8370. Your concern for the non-renewable cultural heritage of the state is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ted M. Spencer
State Historic Preservation Officer



Jenna Carlson Dietmeier
Review & Compliance Coordinator

Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation Form - Region 6

Originating Person: Jonathan Beyer Date Submitted: 1/31/2022
Telephone Number: 605-350-0712

I. **Service Program and Geographic Area or Station Name:** Huron Wetland Management District

II. **Flexible Funding Program** (e.g. Joint Venture, etc) if applicable: NA

III. **Location:** Location of the project including County, State and TSR (township, section & range):

Beadle County, South Dakota, T. 110 N., R. 63 W., Section 3- portions of NE1/4, Section 2 – portions of NW1/4

IV. **Species/Critical Habitat:** List federally endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species or designated or proposed critical habitat that may occur within the action area. To obtain species lists: <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

A. Listed species and/or their habitat within the action area:

a. Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (Threatened) – Habitat: roost during summer singly or in colonies underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees. Spend winter hibernating in caves and mines, called hibernacula.

b. Whooping crane (*Grus americana*) (Endangered) – Migration corridor is within project area. Habitat: shallow wetlands with emergent vegetation during migration.

c. Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) (Threatened) – Habitat: Potentially could use wetlands in the area during migration.

d. Topeka Shiner (*Notropis topeka*) (Threatened) – Habitat: Potentially could use wetlands in the area during migration.

B. Proposed species and/or proposed critical habitat within the action area

a. None

C. Candidate species within the action area

a. Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) (Candidate) – Habitat: milkweed species for reproduction, diverse native grasslands for foraging, and large trees for roosting.

b. Regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) (Candidate) – Habitat: diverse native grasslands.

Project Description: Describe proposed project or action or, if referencing other documents, prepare an executive summary (attach additional pages as needed):

The project will occur within a formally undeveloped agricultural field that consists of a mix of cool season invasive and replanted native grasses. Portions of the project area were previously disturbed and used as a borrow pit during the US Hwy 14 construction project. The project will consist of the construction of a new refuge headquarters building. A gravel parking lot will be constructed adjacent to the refuge headquarters building and a gravel entrance drive will connect the parking lot to US Hwy 14. In addition, there will be an evapotranspiration treatment bed and retention basin located on the site. Underground utilities lines will be installed as part of the project (i.e. fiber optic communication, rural water, and electric).

VI. **Determination of Effects:**

(A) **Description of Effects:** Describe the action(s) that may affect the species and critical habitats listed in item IV. Your rationale for the Section 7 determinations made below (B) should be fully described here.

The construction of the proposed refuge headquarters building and the associated parking lot and entrance drive should have no significant impacts to the species listed in item IV. Disturbance to the existing grassland stands is estimated at 5-7 acres. The grassland composition of the current stand includes invasive cool season grasses and planted natives. The areas disturbed during construction will be reseeded to native grass species and forbs upon completion of the project.

A. Listed species:

Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – No known roosting sites within project area. The project will not involve the removal of trees. No effects are expected.

Whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) – Whooping cranes are not likely to be found within the construction area. Project work will be conducted in close proximity to a highly traveled US Highway. No effects are expected.

Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) – The project area consists of a mix of invasive cool season and replanted native grasses. All wetland areas will be avoided during construction. No effects are expected.

Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*) – The project area does not consist of any Topeka shiner streams or streams that potentially could provide habitat for Topeka shiners. No effects are expected.

B. Proposed Species: None

C. Candidate Species:

Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) – The project area consists of a mix of invasive cool season and replanted native grasses with few forbs currently present. Approximately 5-7 acres of the existing grassland stand will be disturbed as a result of this project. The disturbed areas that are not developed as a result of the project will be reseeded to a native grass and forb species mix upon completion of the project. No effects are expected.

Regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) – The project area consists of a mix of invasive cool season and replanted native grasses with few forbs currently present. Approximately 5-7 acres of the existing grassland stand will be disturbed as a result of this project. The disturbed areas that are not developed as a result of the project will be reseeded to a native grass and forb species mix upon completion of the project. No effects are expected.

(B) **Determination:** Determine the anticipated effects of the proposed project on species and critical habitats listed in item IV. Check all applicable boxes and list the species (or attach a list) associated with each determination.

Determination

No Effect: This determination is appropriate when the proposed project will not directly or indirectly affect (neither negatively nor beneficially) individuals of listed/proposed/candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat of such species. **No concurrence from ESFO required.**

X

Northern long-eared bat, Whooping cranes, Red knot, Topeka shiner, Monarch butterfly, Regal fritillary.

May Affect but Not Likely to Adversely Affect: This determination is appropriate when the proposed project is likely to cause insignificant, discountable, or wholly beneficial effects to individuals of listed species and/or designated critical habitat. **Concurrence from ESFO required.**

May Affect and Likely to Adversely Affect: This determination is appropriate when the proposed project is likely to adversely impact individuals of listed species and/or designated critical habitat. **Formal consultation with ESFO required.**

May Affect and Likely to Adversely Affect but the proposed action is for the purpose of endangered or threatened species recovery and falls under Region 6's Programmatic Consultation on Service-initiated Recovery Actions: This determination is appropriate when adverse effects are likely but the project is designed to assist with recovery of listed species and/or designated critical habitat. **Concurrence from the ESFO that the project is covered by the programmatic consultation is required.**

May affect but Not Likely to Jeopardize candidate or proposed species/critical habitat: This determination is appropriate when the proposed project may affect, but is not expected to jeopardize the continued existence of a species proposed for listing or a candidate species, or adversely modify an area proposed for designation as critical habitat. **Concurrence from ESFO optional.**

Likely to Jeopardize candidate or proposed species/critical habitat: This determination is appropriate when the proposed project is reasonably expected to jeopardize the continued existence of a species proposed for listing or a candidate species, or adversely modify an area proposed for designation as critical habitat. **Conferencing with ESFO required.**

Signature _____
[Supervisor at originating station]

Date _____